

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

SAM-01 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20

DRC-01 /157 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1544

INFO CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

DOD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK PRIORITY

COMIDEASTFOR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0796

DOD FOR ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, BA, US

SUBJECT : RETAINING MIDDLE EAST FORCE IN BAHRAIN; PRESS ATTACK

1. FOR LAST SEVERAL WEEKS IT HAS BEEN WIDELY KNOWN IN BAHRAIN THAT GOB CONSIDERING REERSING ITS OCTOBER 1973 DECISION TO TERMINATE STATIONING AGREEMENT AND EXPEL MIDDLE EAST FORCE. KEY GOVERNMENT FIGURES HAVE, OF COURSE, CONSULTED WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS PREPARING THE WAY FOR THIS DECISION. THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC COMMENT, HOWEVER, SINCE PRIME MINISTER'S INTERVIEW WITH AL-ANWAR PUBLISHED HERE IN EARLY AUGUST (MANAMA 606).

2. ABDULLAH MADANI, MODERATE EDITOR OF BAHRAINI WEEKLY, AL-MAWAKEF, WHICH NORMALLY IS SYMPATHETIC TO GOVERNMENT, HAS NOW COME OUT WITH EDITORIAL QUESTIONING THE DESIRABILITY OF STATIONING AGREEMENT. MADANI NOTES CRITICALLY THAT GOB, IN MOVING BRITISH FORCE OUT UPON INDEPENDENCE PERMITTED U.S. NAVY TO STAY WITH NO INDICATION BAHRAIN BENEFITTED FROM U.S. PRESENCE, THAT THIS "MISTAKE" WAS
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RECOGNIZED AND CORRECTED DURING OCTOBER 1973 WAR, BUT THAT NOW

THERE IS INCREASING SPECULATION THAT STATIONING AGREEMENT AND U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE MAY BE RETAINED. MADANI CONTENDS THAT IN MAKING SUCH A DECISION GOB HAS TO CONVINCE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND PUBLIC OPINION THAT U.S. NAVY PRESENCE HERE BENEFITS BAHRAIN AND THAT U.S. POLICY TOWARDS ARABS JUSTIFIES GOB COOPERATION WITH U.S.

3. COMMENT: WHILE IT WOULD BE NAIVE TO ASSUME DECISION TO RETAIN MIDDLE EAST FORCE WOULD NOT SUBJECT GOB TO PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESS CRITICISM AFTER THE FACT, APPEARANCE MADANI EDITORIAL AT THIS TIME IS MOST UNHELPFUL, EVEN IF IT DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN GOB NEGOTIATING POSITION. IT HIGHLIGHTS URGENCY OF WRAPPING UP OUR PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOB WELL BEFORE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESUMES OCTOBER 23. AT THE MOMENT, GOB CONSIDERS BALL IN OUR COURT ON BOTH JURISDICTION QUESTIONS (MANAMA 792) AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/RENT ISSUE (MANAMA 788).
TWINAM

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